



March 8, 2013

Testimony of
COLEEN MARREN, NEWS DIRECTOR, WTIC-TV, FoxCT
Connecticut Broadcasters Association

Before the

Transportation Committee

concerning

SENATE BILL 975, AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO THE TRANSPORTATION STATUTES

Co-Chair Maynard, Co-Chair Guerrero, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide you the Connecticut Broadcasters Association's comments in concerning S.B. 176. My name is Coleen Marren and I am News Director of WTIC-TV, FoxCT. The Connecticut Broadcasters Association (CBA) membership comprises all of the FCC-licensed broadcast radio and television stations in Connecticut.

I am here to speak specifically to Section 4 of Senate Bill 975, which would authorize the Commissioner of the DOT to establish a procedure for issuing permits for "filming" on state highway rights of way and state land controlled by the DOT. We understand that this provision has been proposed in order to streamline the formal process for authorizing the use of such locations by film production companies and we certainly support that effort.

Out of an abundance of caution, however, we must point out that the words "film" and "filming" in the bill are undefined, leaving an unknown scope for their interpretation. In a time when use of actual film for any sort of video production is dwindling to the point of disappearance and the term "film" is often used very loosely, we are concerned that the proposed permitting process could someday be interpreted to apply to any sort of video recording or transmission. As you are aware, television and other news operations, particularly including the state's broadcast stations, extensively engage in digital and taped video production (and many, if not a majority of, 'film' productions are produced digitally, with no literal film involved). No matter how expeditious and efficient the envisioned permitting process may be, it would not be able to respond with the speed usually needed for news coverage. To the best of our knowledge, television news production on state highways and property has not entailed the kinds of issues that feature film production can and in any event, general laws regulating the use of such locations has been completely adequate to correct any problems that might arise in the course of such activities. Consequently, we believe that it is essential that the terms "film" and "filming" be tightly defined (or replaced) so as to apply solely to the types of projects intended to be addressed by this legislation.

Thank you for considering our comments.

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